

REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST CAUCUS Newsletter

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SDS BETRAYED

The Cambodian crisis and national general campus strike, which has become the core of all anti-war activities, presents tremendous opportunities for SDS. Whether the present leadership and politics of national SDS will be able to take advantage of these opportunities can only be determined by looking at the development of SDS since the split last summer. Since the New Haven conference over Christmas, a major change in political direction has taken place. Briefly, we have seen the abandonment of the campus worker-student alliance strategy and the drift toward mainstream student radicalism.

The Quiet Death of the CWSA

WSA-led SDS emerged from the Chicago split convention as the most serious, working-class oriented wing of the radical student movement. Unfortunately, the WSA leadership chose to embody this working-class orientation in a particularly narrow and apolitical form--the campus-worker-student alliance. All SDS members were supposed to get jobs on campus and the main activity of the chapters was to agitate around campus worker grievances. The CWSA had the misfortune of being simultaneously boring, politically trivial, and hard to carry out. Attempting to carry it out led to the attrition of most SDS chapters down to a

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WHERE WE STAND

The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus is the left opposition in SDS fighting for an aggressive socialist policy in contrast to the narrow social work approach of the PL-controlled leadership. Rejecting campus parochialism, we seek to build an SDS which can provide a militant leadership for all major social struggles, particularly those centered around the labor movement. We want to intervene in these struggles with a radical socialist program through which we can recruit other revolutionary workers and students. Important elements of our program are a break with the capitalist parties and formation of a worker's party; a shorter work week with no decrease in pay to eliminate unemployment; opposition to racial oppression, particularly within the labor movement; labor strikes against the Viet Nam war and other manifestations of U.S. imperialism; defense of all left groups against police repression (the Panthers and Weathermen); for a class analysis of sexual and racial oppression.

The need for a revolutionary socialist youth organization, open to all political tendencies seeking revolutionary change, was clearly demonstrated by the recent spontaneous upsurge of students and workers over the Cambodian and Kent State crises. Neither SDS nor any other left group was able to provide militant leadership and direction to the movement. Only an organization offering serious political alternatives can lead the anti-war movement to a mass opposition against the capitalist state. We call upon all those who see the need for a militant socialist policy to join and support the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus!

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hard core of WSA activists.

In our resolution presented to the New Haven conference, we noted that: "The CWSA's 'on campus' orientation repels many politically conscious students, who want to involve themselves in the major social struggles currently taking place." The correctness of these views was confirmed by the WSA leadership, itself, when within a few months, they began to downgrade the CWSA and seek roads to the mass of student activists, particularly in the anti-war movement. Thus, while SDS intervened perfunctorily in the October 15th Moratorium, a major effort was made to play a big role in the April anti-war protests. Of course, the CWSA hasn't been officially dropped and, when challenged, the WSA leadership will contend that the CWSA strategy is as important as ever. It's just that most chapters have forgotten about the CWSA and are concentrating on other things. However, a few chapters have had the political honesty to abandon the CWSA formally. Thus, Brandeis SDS voted to drop the CWSA because it was too advanced for most students!

What Is Irresponsible Leadership?

The role of political leadership is to formulate policy and program. Before adopting a basic political line, it should be thoroughly discussed within the organization. If a political line fails, the leadership should take responsibility for the failure and analyze why it failed and whether the underlying political conceptions are wrong. Where a bad policy has been subject to correct criticism, as the RMC correctly criticized the CWSA strategy, the leadership should, at least, admit that its critics were right and should be listened to with respect in the future.

Throughout the year, the WSA leadership has acted in a totally irresponsible way. The CWSA was launched as the major activity for SDS without any discussion by the membership. It was also abandoned without any discussion and evaluation, or even acknowledgement that it was being abandoned. In New Haven, we were accused of being anti-working class, wreckers and racists when we criticized the CWSA as the main activity of SDS. Yet, a mere three months later, the same people who criticized us confirmed the correctness of our views when they were forced to turn away from the campus cafeteria to the mainstream of the student movement! The same people, who at New Haven were prating about the bourgeois life styles of the SDS membership, were, just a few months later, writing articles in New Left Notes about the importance of being nice to hippies and liberals so SDS wouldn't appear too narrow. Given the very short time between New Haven and the de-emphasis of the CWSA, some of the people who viciously attacked us at the New Haven conference must have known that the CWSA might not last much longer. A leadership that is unwilling to face its own mistakes and attacks its critics, when it knows them to be right, is politically bankrupt and morally corrupt. The present SDS leadership must be replaced by healthy revolutionary forces.

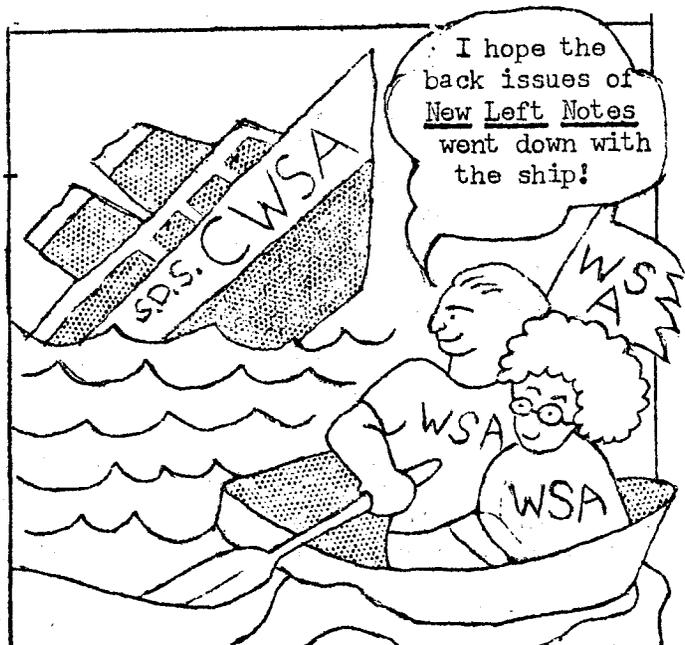
In pushing the CWSA, the WSA leadership frittered away eight valuable months during which right wing forces have strengthened their control of the student anti-war movement.

The Return to Mainstream

New Leftism

If the CWSA is no longer the main activity of SDS, what is? In a sense, nothing is. No single activity has replaced the CWSA as the characteristic action of SDS. Rather, chapters have been encouraged to engage in those activities likely to bring in the maximum number of students. This policy leads to the political fragmentation of SDS and an adaption to mainstream student radicalism, as SDS tail-ends the sentiments of most student activists. Thus, some chapters concentrate on abolishing ROTC, others on defending the Panthers

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and other black militants, others on getting rid of a particularly offensive school trustee, etc. We are returning to the SDS of a few years ago.

The organizational collapse of the RYM forces have stranded many old SDS types, who basically have RYM politics and no place to go. This creates a political vacuum which there is great pressure for SDS to fill. The past few months have seen the increasing coming together of SDS and RYM-type groups. Thus, on April 15th, in Boston and New York, SDS joined with RYM types in attacking the respectable peace movement. United fronts with all anti-imperialist radicals are certainly justified. However, the purpose of these united fronts must be to win such radicals to the view that the way to overthrow U.S. imperialism is not by having a handful of students assault establishment peaceniks, but by turning the labor movement in an anti-capitalist direction and sweeping the American bourgeoisie away. In other words, the key question is whether these united fronts will be dominated by RYM type politics or the politics the WSA stood for last July. At Berkeley, recently, there was a united front meeting of SDS and the Bay Area Revolutionary Student Union, one of the groups that split last July. The meeting was dominated by the RSU's apolitical confrontationism, with SDS's sole contribution being a warmed over version of the CWSA.

We are entering a period in which various SDS chapters will fight ROTC, defend the Panthers and other black militants, organize anti-imperialist demonstrations, "confront" establishment figures and the like, depending on local conditions. Such activities are surely desirable and necessary for a healthy SDS. But they indicate no orientation to the labor movement and, in themselves, can not revolutionize American society. The present leadership of SDS, or rather lack of it, is abandoning the positions won last July and re-creating the SDS of a few years ago.

Political Spinelessness and Gangsterism

While adapting politically to mainstream student radicalism, the WSA has sought to maintain its identity by organizational muscle and downright gangsterism. In the first RMC Newsletter, we warned about the sectarian and undemocratic tendencies within the WSA leadership. These tendencies have intensified in the past period.

The Progressive Labor Party and WSA continue to regard their relationship with other radical groups as roughly similar to that of a Balkan clan and its ancestral enemies. On May 3, in Boston, seven PLP-WSA members assaulted an individual member of the Young Socialist Alliance and Student Mobe, who, acting as a disciplined member of his organization, had defended the speakers platform against SDS's takeover April 15th. While disagreeing with it as a tactic, the assault on the speakers platform was at least a political act. Beating up an individual YSAer is closer to blood feuds and clan warfare than it is to revolutionary socialism. There is an internal opposition to the SWP-YSA's class collaborationism in the anti-war movement. And in attacking rank and file YSAers, the PLP-WSA gave the SWP-YSA leadership the greatest gift they could, by strengthening group solidarity and enabling that leadership to dismiss left oppositionists as insane, sectarian criminals.

If any doubt remained concerning PL-WSA's willingness to employ thug tactics against opponent radicals, it was removed on May 24 when around 60 of them attempted to battle their way into a SMC meeting despite the latter's earlier willingness to admit duly registered SDS spokesmen to the meeting. These tactics must be repudiated by SDS if it is to salvage its reputation in the radical movement. This is not a matter of moralism, nor do RMC members believe that the radical movement can or should exist as a big uncontending homogeneous mass. Rather, it is a question of understanding how revolutionary consciousness is built or destroyed. PL-WSA aids the class-collaborationist SMC leadership and the bourgeoisie itself in diverting anti-war activists in a reformist direction by such atrocities. Inexperienced people who take at face value PL's claim to be the Leninist vanguard can be permanently lost to communism when they see the ostensible vanguard actually behave in the old Stalinist hooligan tradition which they correctly despise. PL-WSA is, of course, merely responding in the only way it knows to external and internal difficulties and differences

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it isn't, by training and experience, equipped to handle, in the same way it has been unable to handle opposition in SDS politically, even running away when placed in a minority, as at the Memphis regional conference in May (see back page story). If PL-WSA cannot defend its politics except by violence or by flight, SDS should not suffer for it! Condemn hooligan violence within the working-class and radical movements!

The Internal Regime

Internally, the WSA leadership is forcing through a privileged relationship with the Progressive Labor Party. And the use of violence is by no means directed only against radical opponents outside of SDS. Recently at Duke University, a group of WSAers threatened Tweet Carter, an SDS-RMC member and interim Southern regional traveller, with violence if she didn't leave Durham immediately.

WSA only builds SDS when it sees sectarian advantage to itself. Two recent events indicate that the WSA leadership is not loyal to SDS and will split from it and try to wreck it if they are ever in a minority. At a South-Central regional conference at Memphis State which they initiated and helped organize, the WSA found themselves consistently outvoted by RMC supporters. Led by PL member Ed Clark, the WSAers simply walked out. Every member of SDS should take to heart the Memphis split. It indicates that the WSA leadership is not loyal to SDS, has no respect for the SDS membership and would split if ever outvoted on a major issue.

An even more destructive example of the WSA's "rule or ruin" policy occurred at Merritt College in San Francisco. Following the split of the former Merritt SDS leadership, SDS activist Lesley Cohen, a PL candidate member, sought to reorganize SDS at Merritt. She was encouraged in this by the WSAers--until they found out Lesley had quit PL and joined the RMC. Posters announcing SDS meetings were ripped down and Lesley got a phone call threatening physical violence. When it became clear that such harassment would not stop her efforts to rebuild Merritt SDS, the PLers and WSAers on campus resorted to deliberate wrecking. They tried to drain off SDS's supporters by calling a meeting--at the same time as the SDS meeting--to discuss campus action against a slumlord-professor. This issue--a natural one for attracting Merritt students to SDS--was used by the WSAers to destroy SDS. Thus the WSA showed it is indifferent to building SDS unless it has complete control of the chapter. At Merritt, however, they were unsuccessful. They were forced to come back into SDS and work with SDSers on the anti-slumlord action, which was adopted as an SDS project.

At the beginning of the Cambodia-Kent crisis, Lesley Cohen sought to initiate strike action and the steering committee of SDS put out a call for a strike containing a number of pro-working class demands. A black nationalist member of the student government sought to sabotage the action because he didn't want a strike to be led by a white, female SDS member. His attack on the strike action was blatantly racist and male chauvanist. Out of factional malice, the WSA blocked with the black nationalist in attacking the SDS strike initiative, thereby discrediting SDS and destroying a promising strike action.

SDS and the Anti-War Movement

Until recently, the WSA continued the policy of Klonsky and Dohrn leaderships in ignoring the non-SDS student anti-war movement. This enabled the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) to establish itself as the "mainstream" organization of the anti-war movement. A front group of the Young Socialist Alliance, the SMC is a single issue organization which welcomes anyone who is "anti-war", including the anti-war wing of the ruling class.

Recently the WSA has seen the need to fight the SMC leadership and has taken to working within the SMC. We must be clear on the goals and politics of fighting the SMC. SDS should not consign itself to being the left opposition within SMC. Rather it should seek to recapture its role as the dominant organization of the student anti-war movement, winning over the healthiest elements from the SMC and bringing them into SDS.

The WSA has correctly chosen to fight against the SMC's rotten
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position that liberal politicians are a legitimate part of the anti-war movement. However, the way to fight liberal politicians is not for a minority of students to physically drive them off speakers' stands. This is nothing but Weatherman-type confrontation-terrorist tactics. Liberal "anti-war" politicians, like Lindsay and McGovern, must be discredited politically and repudiated by the anti-war movement. To do this, it is necessary to link up the Indo-Chinese war with the class struggle at home and the imperialist system abroad.

The growth of the anti-war bourgeoisie is not merely an attempt to co-opt the anti-war movement, but reflects a basic split within the ruling class on the Indo-China War itself. An important section of the ruling class believes the war is unwinnable at the present level of engagement and the economic and political costs of winning are not worth it. In other words, they are willing to accept defeat in Indo-China to maintain the stability of the system elsewhere. The Rand Corp., research and publicity agency for the CIA, stated this very clearly when it called for the unilateral withdrawal of U.S. troops. The call for immediate and unconditional withdrawal remains the basic minimum demand for SDS. However, its political impact diminishes since it doesn't distinguish between those who want the U.S. to get out only because it is losing and those of us who want the U.S. to lose. SDS should also adopt and push the slogan "Victory for the Indo-Chinese Revolution," a slogan no bourgeois politician can pretend to have any sympathy for at all.

SDS in the Current Crisis

The national general campus strike following the Cambodian invasion and Kent State Massacre highlighted the damage done to the radical student movement by last year's split in SDS and the subsequent fragmentation of the student left. Almost everyone taking part in the strikes felt the need for a single, open mass radical student organization capable of co-ordinating the various strike activities, shifting forces to weak and endangered campuses, and serving as a vehicle for determining policy and tactics.

While none of the existing radical groups could have led the spontaneous explosion of student protest on a national level, national SDS wasn't even capable of trying to give any sense of direction to the movement. At Columbia, the WSA ran around seizing buildings with the December 4th Movement (RYM's successor in the New York area). And, irony of ironies, the Columbia CWSA turned out to be in the right wing of the campus workers. The campus workers disagreed on whether to go out on strike in sympathy with the students or call for a two-day moratorium with pay from the administration. The WSA "campus workers" supported the moratorium with pay demand. No doubt, workers should strike against the war only if financed by the bourgeoisie. As previously noted, the Merritt College WSA forces sabotaged a promising strike led by SDS out of factional malice. At the SDS rally in Washington, the WSA leadership simply repeated the same slogans of the past two years. There was no recognition that the situation had qualitatively changed and that any worker, who was at all anti-war, was now sympathetic to the radical student movement. Unlike past student strikes, which were isolated events growing out of particular student-administration conflicts, the current strike wave is the most important single aspect of a general social protest against the administration's policy.

The Way Forward--Toward a General Strike Against the War

Since its inception, the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus has argued that the way out of the twin deadends of the anti-war movement--endless demonstrations and confrontation-terrorism--is through labor strikes against the war. The WSA has consistently opposed the anti-war strike demand as elitist. The current crisis has clearly demonstrated the urgency of a general anti-war strike and has established the WSA as among the more backward elements in the student movement. Every serious student striker realizes that the current wave of campus strikes must be extended to other sections of society or die out, accomplishing nothing. Thus, an open meeting of 300 strikers at the New School in New York voted unanimously to work for a general labor anti-war strike. And similar developments took place at New York University and Harvard (where the WSA has decided to concentrate its efforts fighting ROTC). Out of the New School strike committee work came two mass meet-

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ings of students and trade unionists, and continuing groups of students and workers organizing anti-war strike actions. Such activities and organizations always contain the danger of serving as props for the labor bureaucracy. Nevertheless they represent a tremendous step forward in terms of co-operation between the radical student movement and militant workers around shared political goals. This type of "worker-student alliance" is light years in advance of the WSA's patronizing, social work approach. Moreover, contrary to the WSA's theories, the political differences that have arisen in this work have not been between students as a group and workers as a group, but have cut across the worker-student division.

If SDS is not to dissipate and die in the coming period, it is necessary to link opposition to war with the class struggle at home and concentrate our main energies on building for a general strike against the war.

RMC STATEMENT: ON PL-WSA HOOLIGANISM IN BOSTON

Over the past two months, several physical attacks have been made against the Student Mobilization Committee and its supporters in the Boston area, notably members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance. These attacks were made by members of the Progressive Labor Party and the Worker-Student Alliance caucus of SDS. While we have sharp, fundamental differences with the politics of the SMC, YSA and SWP and the role they play in the anti-war movement, we are absolutely opposed to the gangster-like attacks made on these organizations by PL-WSA. We have in the past and will in the future stand together with the YSA, SWP and SMC--and any other grouping within the labor and radical movement whose rights are threatened--to defend their rights to hold meetings and carry out activities without fear of violent attack from any one.

At a meeting in Boston held on 1 June to discuss a statement circulated nationally by SMC denouncing these attacks, we endorsed that position and added this amendment:

"The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus of SDS repudiates gangster tactics within the movement and will support all defense efforts against violent attacks."

We wish, further, to repudiate as a calculated lie the leaflet issued in the name of New England Regional SDS, "Why SMC/YSA Lies About SDS." The statement (which conveniently neglects to mention the Mafia-like beating of SMC activist Bob Bresnahan on 3 May by 8-members of PL and SDS) is a gross and transparent attempt to shift the blame for the later violence onto the YSA-SWP. It's not true and it won't work; the account published in the 12 June issue of The Militant, signed by a number of people not at all sympathetic to the SWP/YSA, is accurate in all particulars. We know because leading RMC supporters were personally present on the occasions in which violence took place.

Insofar as the beating of Bresnahan is concerned, members of Now Left Notes and national SDS staff were involved. Such actions make a mockery of SDS's pronouncements of non-exclusionism and democracy. At the upcoming August convention the RMC intends to call upon the highest body of the national organization to repudiate these gangster tactics and to condemn those who take part in them. Such harsh measures are necessary as a deterrent to ensure such outrageous actions do not occur in SDS's name again.

Our support for united self-defense actions within the movement is neither one-sided nor predicated on any particular agreement with our views. Last fall, in New York and New Orleans, present RMC supporters fought side-by-side with PL and the WSA when their right to attend SDS meetings was challenged by the "Revolutionary Youth Movement" splitters. We have offered resolutions calling for defense of all groups under persecution of the bourgeois state, including the Black Panthers and Weatherman.

At the same time we consider the SWP/YSA's call for united defense now awfully late and awfully hypocritical. A year ago, when PL, the Spartacist League, International Socialists and other groups were harassed and beaten at the Black Panther's "United Front Against Fascism" conference, the SWP/YSA stood by and offered no support. Further, we agree with PL and the WSA that the SWP/YSA's leading role in turning the anti-war movement into a class-collaborationist popular front is a blow against revolutionary struggle in this country. PL's physical reaction only strengthens reformism! Our support for the SWP/YSA's rights is undertaken despite, not because of, their views. But that support continues to be real, as any trespassers will continue to learn concretely.

(RMC VICTORY, cont. from back page)

sense accidental; they were planned, calculated political acts in the fullest sense of the term. Such tactics demonstrated anew the political bankruptcy of the organizations behind them. They revealed frustration at inability to win supporters over to their views by means of political struggle and debate. Such acts of contempt for the membership must be understood in terms of the future of SDS as a continuing organization. The justified contempt most of the movement feels toward the CP and its politics of betrayal makes destructive tactics a necessity for them; as for PL-WSA, the past year has shown that their strategy is one of wrecking any SDS chapter they do not control lock, stock and barrel.

The CP's move to smash SDS in the South surfaced early Saturday afternoon, near the end of the discussion on the second agenda point, the anti-war movement. Because Tennessee repression against radicals is so great that all standard meeting places were closed to SDS, the conference was forced to locate in an abandoned liquor store in the Black ghetto. The CP, naturally, attempted to turn this repression against us to their advantage. Egged on by two supporters of the "Young Workers Liberation League", two self-appointed, largely unknown "leaders of the Black community" and a few supporters barged in denouncing the conference as "racist"; their supporting evidence seemed to consist only of the fact we hadn't "notified" them of our meeting. Some uproar ensued because we "had brought the pigs into the community" (there were a large number of plainclothes cops hanging about, keeping the meeting under surveillance and busily snapping photos--why this was our fault is not clear). Some more manufactured hoopla arose from the claim that there was no point on "racism" on the agenda, despite the fact that the RMC position paper On Left-Wing Violence: Fight the Repression--Not the Movement! clearly called for the right of armed self-defense for all the oppressed (a point denied by the CP, who term such practice "counter productive") along with a call for legal and financial aid to the Panthers, Weathermen, etc. In order to defuse what looked like might become a planned confrontation, however, the conference agreed to insert an hour-and-half point on the agenda for discussion on the general topic of racism. Despite some continuing gross and occasionally embarrassing attempts on the part of the CP'ers to inflame the situation and to whip the participants up into the by-now-standard orgy of self-flagellation and liberal class-race guilt, this tactic failed, the self-appointed black "leaders" had very little to say, and the maneuver petered out.

PL-WSA's initial response to the CP-inspired break-up attempt was enthusiastic participation in the race-baiting from the right (of the Right-on-Brother, this-meeting-we're-in-sure-is-racist! variety) Their delight at what they they thought was their majority, right off the streets, diminished, however, as soon as they realized that the CP'ers and their temporary followers were as eager to smash PL's influence in SDS as that of the "racist" "Trotskyites"! Perfectly willing to make a rotten bloc with the right against the left, PL-WSA revealed itself momentarily too politically innocent--or too desperate--to check which rotten bloc they were joining!

SDSers ought to find this scenario recognizable as the CP's tactics in Memphis were amazingly similar to those the RYM leadership used against the WSA faction at the June, 1969, Chicago split convention. There it was the Panthers who were the spearhead, who allowed themselves to be used by the RYM collective to falsely racist-bait the WSA--all for the purpose of trying to smash their majority. That attempt, if organizationally no more successful than the Memphis ploy, was politically equally cynical in its manipulation of unconscious elements, and in its tack of interjecting racial divisiveness into the radical, working-class movement. It ought to be clear by now that such attempts to inject racial poison into movement politics can be fought only by increased class consciousness, not Stalinoid self-flagellation.

Ed Clark Makes His Move

On Sunday afternoon, before the RMC position on the labor movement had been presented and the conference was moving into its plenary session, the PL-WSA minority made its move to destroy the significance and validity of the proceedings. At this point Ed Clark, New Orleans PL'er and minority floorleader, got up to denounce the proceedings as "unrepresentative" and "dominated by Trotskyites (sic!)". He proceed-

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ed to read the following statement, signed by his entire faction:

We the undersigned, attending the SDS South Central Regional Conference in Memphis, Tenn. hereby withdraw from this conference on the following grounds:

1) It is not representative of SDS in the South or nationally. Approximately 20 of the 35 or so people present and voting are members of the Spartacist League--a proportion of Trotskyites far in excess of their true significance anywhere in the South except Memphis MDS.

2) This accidental majority is being used by the Spartacist League to force a mechanical adoption of every fantastic Trotskyite position--from "deformed workers states" to "financial support for the Weathermen" to "a one day general strike."

3) We will not allow our presence to imply that we believe such a "vote" really represents SDS."

Unfortunately for Clark, his denunciation of the Conference neglects a few decisive facts regarding the situation. In reality, his statement boils down to one essential: that the Trotskyist RMC forces represented numerically a large majority at the meeting. It is fair to assume that, had the situation been reversed like New Haven or Los Angeles where the WSA instead held a voting majority, Clark would have found nothing about which to complain. Were this not the case, why did he wait until the plenary--the voting--session to notice this alleged imbalance?

Split in Southern WSA?

It is true that the RMC is by far the strongest political force in Memphis MDS. Clark "forgets" to mention in his denunciation, however, the salient fact that it was he himself who chose Memphis as the convention site, and he who mailed out on quite short notice over a hundred copies of the convention call. That the conference was not much larger or represented many other SDS tendencies, was not by our design; indeed, we hoped and expected it would represent a broader cross-section of South-Central SDS. But the fact that NC'er Debbie Russell's Tallahassee WSA chapter, certainly as strong as any in the deep South, chose to boycott Clark's own Conference (why?) can hardly be blamed on us! His lack of authority in his own organization can hardly be laid at our door.

The Politics of the Memphis Split

The WSA denunciation represents the WSA's only political statement to come out of the entire conference. It singles out the three major position papers presented by the RMC and labels a portion of each (in somewhat distorted form) "Trotskyite", i.e., untouchable and therefore obviously undeserving of any support. What it actually represents, in somewhat peculiar form, is a coverup for the inability of the Clark-led forces to defend either their own or the official Boston SDS positions (not at all the same thing) before an opponent political tendency.

1) The argument about "deformed workers states" is a reference to a passage in "The Class Struggle Road to Women's Liberation" and represents the difficulty faced by the WSA on this topic, who claimed to have no major differences with us on this score. The major difference between RMC and the PL-led WSA forces to date on the Women's Liberation struggle has been the WSA's violent opposition to our demand for abortion law reform (cf RMC Newsletter #1, report on the New Haven conference). While the WSA had no difficulty in ramming through their line on this subject in a conference where they held a vast majority, they did not feel so confident about defending it in a real debate in a situation they didn't control. In any case, several WSA'ers in Memphis stated they had no real disagreement with the major thrust of the document. Since the section on the deformed workers states was confined to the argument alone, and not to the resolutions section of the article this meant they would have no principled justification for not supporting and voting for it. This impossible situation for the WSA was conveniently solved by the walkout.

(Just parenthetically: at one point in the discussion, Clark called the Soviet Union "capitalist", a sociological definition (defamation?) of the state born out of the October Revolution formerly

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confined to anti-communists and Mao Tse-Tung. But, since Trotskyists have always defended the Soviet Union as a bureaucratically deformed noncapitalist formation, Clark would have been asked during the Plenary to describe how and when this greatest of all counter-revolutions took place, how it took place peacefully, and why neither we nor the U.S. government had ever heard of it. This no doubt exquisite experience for those sitting in attendance was forgone as a result of the walk out.)

2) The "defense of the Weatherman" was one section of a document "Defend the Movement--Not the Repression" calling for armed defense of all the oppressed and singled out for financial and legal aid those groups--Panthers, Weathermen--most systematically under attack by the bourgeois state. Since the WSA was unable to explain why they supported the Panthers but not the Weathermen (and exactly what the difference between the two groups was), or why Spartacist and Progressive Labor (their statement) were part of the "movement" whereas the CP and SWP-YSA were on the other side of the class line, perhaps they were wise not to desire further debate. Further, since PL-WSA have shown much more of an inclination to attack the SWP and/or Student Mobe than to take on the bourgeoisie, and since Spartacist/RMC has actively stood with the SWP in physically stopping these goon-squad gangster assaults, this might call for some reconsideration on the WSA's part as to what non-exclusionism really means.

Fundamental to PL-WSA's inability to distinguish between radical opponents and the ruling class is the apparent fact that its line regarding other tendencies is determined as much by appetites as by principle; they defend the Panthers and not the Weathermen despite the considerable similarity between them largely because the Panthers are bigger, Black, and currently more popular. Thus the publicly uncritical approach to the Panthers, whose demonstrated hostility to Boston SDS is as great as that of the Weathermen. In the case of the Weathermen, the position argued by PL-WSA in Memphis (and before)--that the Weathermen's politics were so wretched as to place them objectively on the other side of the class line--is convenient and dangerous, like dismissing the Soviet Union as "capitalist" and therefore not defending it against American imperialism and its own leader's sellout policies, or mentioning this is only a verbal "gimmick" for refusing to offer substantial joint aid to the Viet Nam Revolution. This wilful confusion of a wretchedly led formation with the class enemy is simultaneously "ultra-left" sounding and opportunistic. Ultra-left in that what could seem more revolutionary than denouncing the Weathermen as bourgeois agents?--and opportunistic in that evading their defense against repression enables PL-WSA to avoid fighting the bourgeoisie when the latter does not agree with PL-WSA's notion of who's on what side of the class line.

In the spirit of its position on the necessity to defend all radicals against ruling-class attack, whatever our criticisms of those attacked, the Memphis conference voted overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution calling for "moral, legal and financial aid" to "Clark, Schafer and others currently under Louisiana police repression." Clark and his followers were not present to comment on the resolution, as they had denounced the conference and walked out shortly before. (Presumably they would have voted for it.)

3) Our General Strike Against the War argument is well known on the left. Since the Yankee invasion of Cambodia and the upsurge in labor militancy against the war the WSA's arguments looks absurd, and the tactic becomes clearly a sine qua non of bringing the war to a screeching halt. So WSA has a bit more difficulty in explaining why they and their sworn enemies, the YSA, felt this was such an outrageous idea. The document itself deals with this issue in much greater detail, interested readers are referred to it. (available from Memphis MDS)

The RMC has always believed that the politics of the PL-led WSA were qualitatively superior to those of the RYM-Weatherman splitters at the June conference, and we still hold that position. They were better because--and only because--they argued for some kind of turn toward the working class, unlike those who saw American society only in Third World or racial terms. But PL-WSA's kind of working-class politics could never make Marxism attractive to either students or

(cont. on pg. 11)

U S O U T O F A S I A N O W !

Expansion of the Viet Nam War into Cambodia should make it clear that US government and business ambitions in Asia are not to "contain communism" but the uncontained expansion of US imperialism throughout Asia. The expansion of the war after five years of antiwar tactics that vacillate in frustration between "street confrontations" and "legalized" street-walking prostitutions of the antiwar fight, should also make clear the utter bankruptcy of these tactics. Likewise, the ease with which Agnew can cynically co-opt the only demand consistently put forth by the antiwar movement, the demand for "withdrawal of US troops," as the excuse for invading Cambodia, reveals the utter bankruptcy of any pretense the movement may make to program for how the demand will be won. Agnew will not withdraw the troops but neither will the antiwar movement. The antiwar movement cannot even "contain imperialism" but serves only to contain antiwar sentiment and march it in the streets to the local jail, emergency room or to the Democratic Party.

Endless street "actions" do not end an endless war because such actions and their predominantly middle-class participants do not have the social power to oppose big business and the government, which is completely mobilized to support the war. Closing down high schools and colleges may reflect the growing radicalization of students, but closing down the schools or marching in the streets for one day or one hundred days will not stop the most powerful and rapacious warmongers in the history of the world. Remember the Moratorium that was going to develop into an endless student strike if it didn't end the war? Without social power, student strikes have the same social weight as playing hooky.

Increasingly, radicals realize that the only force whose interests are uncompromisingly opposed to the war and which has the social power to defeat the warmongers is the working class. The history of the antiwar movement is the history of lost opportunities to reach the working class, and to include workers in mass actions that can stop the war and prepare workers for the struggle against imperialism. Workers know that the way to fight profit-hungry bosses is not by Sunday strolls but by weekday workstoppages. They have responded to the war-related erosion of their working and living conditions with a wave of the most militant strikes in the US since the end of WW II.

These strikes are not only long and fierce, but often, like the postal wildcat, they are strikes which defy cops, courts, the national guard and army, and the entire government, plus their own trade union misleaders. But these strikes, no matter how militant, are limited to isolated trades around bread & butter (economic) demands and are misled by Meany and his like. These strikes are opposed by big business, the army, government, etc. which know no such limitations and which are mobilized and united as a class, the capitalist class, to defend their interests. It is this same class that right now uses the national guard in Ohio both to massacre student protesters and break the teamster strike. Up against such opposition, economic strikes, no matter how militant and no matter if every demand is won, ends in defeat since the capitalists have both the economic and the political power to rob workers of their gains (e.g., through raising prices and taxes, passing anti-labor legislation, "planned" unemployment and war).

In order for workers to fight back they must be mobilized as a class. This is the power of the general strike and this is why trade union bureaucrats are reluctant to call one and why capitalists fear them. That segment of the Left, namely PL and SWP, which is as reluctant as the union misleaders to call for general, political strikes against the war, do the work of Meany & Co. While (cont. on pg. 11)

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(RMC VICTORY...cont. from pg. 9)

workers. The idea of the revolutionary mission of the working class was trivialized, in the Campus Worker-Student Alliance tactic, to something so narrow and uninspiring as to constitute an obstacle even to building the WSA's kind of SDS. The political level of the students recruited to a politically trivial, reformist program catering to campus parochialism and ignorance of the broad labor movement, required that they be isolated from opponent working class tendencies, lest the WSA recruits desert or become hopelessly confused. Hence the spectacle of Ed Clark walking out of the Memphis conference which he himself had called. Clark and the people who followed him admitted by their actions that they did not take SDS seriously; or, more precisely, that they did not want to defend their politics and program before SDS members, implying both cynicism about their own politics and contempt for SDS. PL-WSA's actions in Memphis were no isolated phenomenon, nor peculiar to the South or to Ed Clark. Memphis was just one more example of the two necessary responses of a Stalinist group to revolutionary criticism: smash it, or flee to protect the illusions of its followers. In Memphis they fled.

US OUT OF ASIA NOW...cont. from pg. 10

students cannot replace militant rank-and-file union leadership and organize a general strike, they can put themselves on record, through such mass actions as marches and student strikes, in support of this kind of essential development within the union movement. And an unequivocal appeal to the labor movement will do more to further such development and to mobilize the left and labor movements into a unified class, anti-war, and anti-imperialist movement than if classless, apolitical Sunday strolls and moratoriums were held everyday until the capitalist apocalypse.

We should keep in mind that it was the WWII strike wave mentioned above, combined with unrest within the army, which actually ended WWII and delayed the US capitalists from sending the troops to smash the Chinese Revolution. We say delayed since restoring capitalism in China, North Viet Nam and North Korea are still the ultimate goals of US capitalism in Asia. The Viet Nam War is only a continuation of the struggle for this goal, and this struggle will not end until US imperialism is victorious in Asia or a working-class revolution is victorious in the US.

TURN THE STUDENT STRIKE INTO AN ANTI-WAR WORKER-STUDENT GENERAL STRIKE!

Free All Left-Wing and Labor Political Prisoners!

Military Victory for the Viet Cong!

--Austin Revolutionary Marxist Caucus

MAJOR RMC POSITION PAPERS FROM THE MEMPHIS CONFERENCE
available free on request:

"The Class Struggle Road to Women's Liberation"

On Left Wing Violence: *"Fight the Repression--
Not the Movement"*

and

"The Anti-War Movement and SDS"

FROM: FOCUS, monthly newsletter of Memphis MDS
P.O. Box 11463,
Memphis, Tenn. 38111

ALL INDOCHINA MUST GO COMMUNIST!

RMC VICTORY IN MEMPHIS!

The South-Central Regional SDS Conference meeting in Memphis, Tenn., over the May Day weekend proved to be a solid victory for the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus and its supporters in the South. Despite two attempts to disrupt the proceedings of the conference or deny its significance, those attending were able to discuss and vote position papers submitted on Women's Liberation, the anti-war struggle and defense of the Movement. An omnibus resolution incorporating RMC views on the labor movement carried (see our documents "From Economism to Leninism," the resolution "Away from Campus Parochialism and Toward the Labor Movement", and the commentary "Left Opposition at New Haven," all contained in RMC Newsletter #1, February 1970). Finally, the conference voted for a resolution demanding that the present Soviet Union leadership "rehabilitate" those heroic Bolshevik leaders of the Russian Revolution murdered by Stalin--Trotsky, Zinoviev, Radek, Bukharin, et al.--whose role and writings have been slandered and kept from the very Russian people for whose liberation they fought. (Text reprinted elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter.) Finally, a report on the Conference was sent to the SDS National Office in Boston, but has not and presumably will not be printed in New Left Notes.

Internal Democracy and Non-Exclusionism

Unlike the New Haven and Los Angeles Conferences run by the PL-led Worker-Student Alliance caucus and reported in earlier issues of the Newsletter, the Memphis meeting chaired by the RMC was an exemplary one. The debate throughout was free and open, and run on a genuinely non-exclusionary basis. Minority individuals were given equal time for debate, for submitting amendments, proposals, resolutions, and the like. Even after the Saturday CP-inspired disruptions and the Sunday PL-WSA walkout (discussed in detail later in this article) the Interim Regional Committee established by the conference proceeded on the basis of proportional democratic representation to leave vacant 4 seats (of an 11-man board) for the WSA and other minorities (should they choose to accept them). This stands diametrically opposed to WSA practice, which not only does not allow minority representation on higher bodies of SDS, but also has not in nearly a year--since last year's June convention--ever printed a single article, letter or resolution submitted by us! This even in spite of the wishes of their own WSA membership, who at the Los Angeles plenary meeting directed New Left Notes to print all the resolutions submitted to that conference which were not voted on!

Perhaps equal in political importance to the resolutions on burning issues of the movement debated and voted by the participants in Memphis were the two attempts made by minority groupings within southern SDS--the Communist Party and PL-WSA--to discredit or destroy the conference and its significance. These disruptive attempts were in no

(cont. on pg.7)

On May 3, 1970, this resolution was passed by the South-Central Regional Conference of SDS.

RESOLVED: That the South Central Regional Convention of SDS recognize the role of the campaign of slander and assassination in the deformed workers' states against Leon Trotsky and his associates in hindering the development of revolutionary consciousness in the world working class, and SDS repudiates this bureaucratic "witch hunt" campaign, calling for the recognition of Trotsky's major role in the world's first proletarian revolution, and calling for free and open discussion of his ideas. We further call for the rehabilitation of other honest Communist leaders slandered and murdered by Stalin, such as Zinoviev, Bukharin, Rakovsky, Radek and thousands more. To ignore this revolutionary responsibility would be to affirm that the world revolution can be built upon a foundation of lies and slander.